



The Buzz About Power Line Safety

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The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) puts safety first and offers the following tips on the importance of staying safe around overhead and underground power lines.

What if I spot a downed wire? Incidents related to accidents, severe weather, trees, etc., can cause a power line to fall to the ground. If you see a downed power wire, stay clear of it and call 9-1-1 immediately to report an electrical emergency. All lines down should be treated as dangerous. Never touch a downed power line or go near one. Always call 9-1-1 immediately.

What should I do if I see a person, animal, or object that is in contact with a downed power line? Do not touch the person, animal, or object because the power line may still be energized. Call 9-1-1 immediately.

What if I need to do outside work near an overhead power line? If your outside work requires you to be near an overhead power line, always remember to keep everything – and everybody – at least 10 feet away from the power line. If you have any questions or concerns, contact your local utility company before starting any work.

When do I need to call 8-1-1 before digging? All digging jobs regardless of size, from planting a small tree to a construction project, require calling 8-1-1 before starting the job. Striking a single underground facility can result in significant injuries or damages to you, the nearby public, and inconvenient outages. Call 8-1-1 at least two working days before you dig. Never take chances when planting tree branches. Know what's below. Call before you dig.

What if a power line falls on and/or comes into contact with my vehicle while I am still in it? Remain calm and stay in your car, as the ground around your car may be energized. Call 9-1-1 on your cell phone or tell someone to call for you. Tell everyone to stay clear and do not touch the vehicle. If there is a fire and you have to exit your vehicle that has come in contact with a downed power line, remove loose items of clothing, keep your hands at your sides, and jump clear of the vehicle, so you are not touching the vehicle when your feet hit the ground. Keep both feet close together and shuffle away from the vehicle without picking up your feet.

A power line carries electricity, which can be dangerous and cause serious injury or even death if you come into contact with it. The CPUC wants you to stay informed and alert to stay safe.

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